State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health

KAREN L. SMITH, MD, MPH
Director and State Public Health Officer

EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor

DRUG OVERDOSE HEALTH ALERT:
Fentanyl-Contaminated Street Norco®
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Situational Update

Sacramento County health officials recently reported 48 overdoses of illicitly obtained drugs and at least 10 deaths over a 10-day period. It is suspected that these overdoses and deaths were the result of consumption of an opioid drug that strongly resembles the prescription opioid drug Norco®, but actually contained an undetermined amount of fentanyl, a powerful synthetic opiate analgesic much more potent than morphine. CDPH is receiving anecdotal reports that similar overdoses and/or deaths, potentially involving fentanyl, have occurred in other counties.

While there is currently no established way to track fentanyl related overdoses in California, there is intense interest at both the federal level and locally in gathering this information. To enhance our understanding of the magnitude of severe adverse outcomes due to use of illicitly obtained fentanyl in California, **the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is requesting all healthcare facilities to:**

1) Voluntarily report suspected and confirmed fentanyl overdose cases to their local health department for reporting to the State. The information you submit will be used solely for public health surveillance. The reports should include:
    a. Name
    b. Date of Birth
    c. Age
    d. Address of residence

2) Test for fentanyl when ordering drug screening on cases of suspected overdose;

3) Be aware that Naloxone is effective in reversing the effects of fentanyl, however, we have received reports that it may take repeated doses of Naloxone over several hours to adequately treat fentanyl overdose, likely due to fentanyl's long half-life; and

4) Warn patients with a history of substance abuse about the risks of purchasing street drugs at this time. Fentanyl is colorless and odorless and cannot be readily detected without laboratory analysis.